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Applicants: Yong Hwan Jeong et al. Docket No.: 01-699
Serial No.: Examiner :
Filed : Art Unit :
For : ZIRCONIUM ALLOY HAVING EXCELLENT CORROSION
RESISTANCE AND MECHANICAL PROPERTIES AND METHOD FOR
PREPARING NUCLEAR FUEL CLADDING TUBE BY
ZIRCONIUM ALLOY

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Hon. Commissioner of Patents & Trademarks
United States Patent & Trademark Office
Washington, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir:

In accordance with the requirements of 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98,
Applicants hereby submit the prior art listed hereinbelow, copies
enclosed.

(1) U.S. Patent No. 5,230,758 entitled METHOD OF PROCESSING
ZIRLO MATERIAL FOR LIGHT WATER REACTOR APPLICATIONS, By
Foster et al., patented July 27, 1993. This patent
discloses an alloy comprising, by weight percent, 0.5-
2.0 niobium, 0.7-1.5 tin, 0.07-0.14 iron, and 0.03-0.14
of at least one of nickel and chromium, and at least
0.12 total of iron, nickel and chromium, and up to 220
ppm C, and the balance essentially zirconium.

Preferably, the alloy contains 0.03-0.08 chromium, and 0.03-0.08 nickel. The alloy is also preferably subjected intermediate recrystallization anneals at a temperature of about 1200°-1300° F., and to a beta quench two steps prior to final size.

(2) U.S. Patent No. 6,125,161 entitled METHOD FOR MAKING ZR ALLOY NUCLEAR REACTOR FUEL CLADDING HAVING EXCELLENT CORROSION RESISTANCE AND CREEP PROPERTIES, By Isobe et al., patented September 26, 2000. This patent discloses a method for making Zr alloy nuclear REACTOR fuel cladding having excellent corrosion resistance and creep properties. The method includes performing hot forging, solution heat treatment, hot extruding, and repeated cycles of annealing and cold rolling of a Zr alloy including; by weight, 0.2 to 1.7% Sn, 0.18 to 0.6% Fe, 0.07 to 0.4% Cr and 0.05 to 1.0% Nb, with the remainder being Zr and incidental impurities, and the incidental nitrogen impurity content being 60 ppm or less, and then performing final stress relief annealing thereon. The annealing is performed at a temperature of 550°C. to 850°C. for 1 to 4 hours such that the accumulated annealing parameter $\sum A_i = \sum t_i \cdot \exp(-40,000/T_i)$ satisfies relationships $-20 \leq \log \sum A_i \leq -15$, and -18-

$10 \cdot X_{Nb} \leq \log \sum A_i \leq -15 - 3.75 \cdot (X_{Nb} - 0.2)$, wherein A_i represents the annealing parameter for the i -th annealing, T_i represents the annealing time (hours) for the i -th annealing, T_i represents the annealing temperature (K) for the i -th annealing, and X_{Nb} concentration (wt %).

(3) U.S. Patent No. 5,838,753 entitled METHOD OF MANUFACTURING ZIRCONIUM NIOBIUM TIN ALLOYS FOR NUCLEAR FUEL RODS AND STRUCTURAL PARTS FOR HIGH BURNUP, By Van Swam et al., patented November 17, 1998. This patent discloses a process for fabricating nuclear fuel rod cladding tube comprising beta quenching a zirconium alloy billet consisting essentially of from 0.5 to 3.25 weight percent niobium, from 0.3 to 1.8 weight percent tin, the balance of the alloy being essentially nuclear grade zirconium with incidental impurities by heating to a temperature in the beta range above 950° C. and rapidly quenching the billet to a temperature below the α plus β to α transformation temperature to form a martensitic structure; extruding the beta-quenched billet at a temperature below 600° C. to form a hollow; annealing the hollow by heating at a temperature up to 590° C.; pilgering the annealed hollow; and final annealing the pilgered annealed hollow to a temperature

up to 590°C. to form the nuclear fuel rod cladding tube comprising the alloy having a microstructure of beta niobium second phase precipitates distributed uniformly intragranularly and intergranularly forming radiation resistant second phase precipitates in the alloy matrix.

The undersigned submits the above-identified references for independent consideration by the Examiner and does not make any admission that these references are or are not material to the present invention or that these references are or are not prior art with respect to the present invention.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as Express Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231

cc November 1, 2001

(Date of Deposit)

Rachel Piscitelli

Name and Reg. No. of Attorney
Rachel Piscitelli
Signature

November 1, 2001

Date of Signature

Date: November 1, 2001

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Respectfully submitted,

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